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Somaya, Sadaf, and Asra play by the ruins of their destroyed house in Janat Bagh, Kunduz, as their father looks on – recently returned after being displaced by years of conflict.

## Protection Field Coordination Toolkit

# Chapter 7: Durable Solutions



Global Protection Cluster

## Chapter 7: Durable Solutions

### Overview

Durable solutions are the end-goal of the displacement cycle. For internally displaced persons (IDPs), achieving a durable solution means being able to rebuild their lives in safety and dignity, free from the vulnerabilities and rights limitations that came with their displacement.

Solutions are not about “ending displacement” numerically but rather about ending the displacement-related vulnerabilities, ensuring equal access to rights and opportunities, and enabling genuine choice and agency for displaced persons.

#### This chapter contains:

- A definition of durable solutions and their relevance for IDPs.
- A summary of key global frameworks guiding durable solutions, including the IASC Framework (2010), the Secretary-General’s Action Agenda (2022), and the 2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Protection Cluster in supporting durable solutions at strategic and operational levels.
- An overview of the GPC Durable Solutions Guidance for Protection Clusters, with practical entry points and best practice examples.

#### Skip ahead to:

7.1 Overview.....	1
7.2 Policy Context and Foundational Frameworks .....	2
The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions (2010) .....	2
The Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement (2022) .....	3
2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement.....	4
7.3 Role of the Protection Cluster in Durable Solutions .....	4
The GPC Durable Solutions Guidance for Protection Clusters .....	5
How to Engage in Durable Solutions Processes .....	6
7.4 Key Resources and Tools.....	7

### 7.1 Overview

Durable solutions are a central objective of the displacement response, requiring sustained attention to rights, needs, and the longer-term recovery of internally displaced persons. While policy frameworks like the [IASC Framework](#), the Secretary-General’s [Action Agenda](#), and the [2025 Guidance on Durable Solutions](#) provide overarching direction, operationalising durable solutions is context-specific and requires flexibility, coordination, and local ownership.

Protection Clusters have an important supporting role to play in these processes. Protection Clusters can contribute critical analysis, advocate for rights-based and inclusive approaches, and support efforts to ensure that IDPs can make informed, voluntary decisions about their futures. They also help identify and reduce

protection risks in potential return, integration, or relocation areas, and ensure that particularly at-risk groups are not overlooked.

The guidance provided in this chapter is not intended to be prescriptive, but rather to offer a set of practical entry points and considerations that can help Protection Clusters engage constructively in solutions processes. Each context will demand different approaches, and Protection Clusters are encouraged to adapt their strategies in line with local dynamics, government leadership, and the priorities of affected communities.

Ultimately, contributing to durable solutions is not about shifting to a new phase of work, but about integrating protection perspectives early and consistently, and supporting collective efforts to address the long-term impacts of displacement.

## 7.2 Policy Context and Foundational Frameworks

The concept of durable solutions is grounded in the [Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement \(1998\)](#), which articulate the rights of IDPs and the responsibilities of States. These non-binding but widely recognised principles affirm that States have the primary duty and responsibility to provide protection and humanitarian assistance to IDPs, including facilitating durable solutions.

Globally, the need for durable solutions has been longstanding, particularly in protracted displacement contexts where IDPs remain in limbo for years. In recognition of this, the [IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons](#) was launched in 2010, offering the most comprehensive and widely accepted operational definition and guidance.

More recently, the United Nations Secretary-General's [Action Agenda on Internal Displacement](#) – also referred to as the “Piper Initiative” after Robert Piper, the Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement – was launched in June 2022. It represents a renewed call to action to address internal displacement in a systematic, coordinated, and solutions-oriented way, recognising that durable solutions must be addressed as a whole-of-society and whole-of-government responsibility, extending beyond the humanitarian sector.

### The IASC Framework on Durable Solutions (2010)

The [IASC Framework](#) provides an explanation of what constitutes a durable solution, what it takes to achieve one, and how progress should be monitored.

**According to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC),**



***A durable solution is achieved when IDPs no longer have specific assistance and protection needs linked to their displacement, and they can enjoy their human rights without discrimination on account of their displacement***

Durable solutions can be realised through one of three pathways:

- **Sustainable reintegration at the place of origin** (commonly referred to as return).
- **Sustainable local integration** in the area where IDPs have taken refuge.
- **Sustainable integration in another part of the country** (settlement elsewhere).

Critically, the choice among these options must be voluntary, informed, and safe, and must be based on non-discrimination and respect for the rights of IDPs.

## Eight Criteria for a Durable Solution

According to the IASC Framework, a durable solution is considered achieved when the following eight criteria are progressively realised.

These criteria are interdependent and should be pursued holistically. No single indicator determines whether a solution has been achieved; rather, it is the combined realisation of rights and opportunities that signals the end of displacement-related vulnerabilities.

The IASC Framework also stresses the importance of IDP participation, conflict sensitivity, and alignment with broader recovery and peacebuilding efforts. Solutions should be part of joint planning and analysis and should be locally led wherever possible.

### Eight Criteria, IASC Framework

- Long-term safety and security
- Adequate standard of living
- Access to livelihoods and employment
- Restoration of housing, land, and property (HLP)
- Access to personal and other documentation
- Family reunification
- Participation in public affairs
- Access to effective remedies and justice

## The Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement (2022)

Building on the IASC Framework, the Secretary-General's [Action Agenda](#) responds to the findings of the [High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement](#) (2019–2021). It is a strategic roadmap for the UN system, national governments, civil society, and other actors to scale up and transform efforts to address internal displacement more sustainably.

The Action Agenda outlines three overarching and interlinked goals:

1. Help IDPs find a durable solution to their displacement
2. Better prevent new displacement crises from emerging
3. Ensure those facing displacement receive effective protection and assistance

These three goals reflect a comprehensive approach – recognising that assistance, prevention, and solutions are interconnected, not sequential phases. Each must be addressed from the outset of a crisis.



### Shifts and Priorities in the Action Agenda:

- **National and local leadership:** States must own and lead solutions, integrating displacement into national development plans, climate strategies, urban planning, and peacebuilding.
- **UN system reform and coordination:**
  - A [Special Adviser on Solutions to Internal Displacement](#) was appointed for two years to drive implementation and high-level advocacy.
  - UN Resident Coordinators are tasked to lead on solutions at the country level, with dedicated support and capacity.
  - A [Steering Group on Solutions to Internal Displacement](#) ensures collective UN action, aligning efforts across humanitarian, development, peace, and climate actors.
- **Inclusive approaches:** IDPs and host communities must be meaningfully involved in decisions that affect their futures. Community-based planning and accountability to affected people are prioritised.
- **Development-oriented approaches:** Solutions are not only humanitarian concerns – they require development financing, livelihoods, infrastructure, and governance support to succeed.

- **Private sector and data:** The Agenda also calls for engaging private sector actors in supporting recovery and solutions, and for improved data systems to track displacement trends, risks, and progress toward solutions.

## 2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement

Developed in line with the Secretary-General's Action Agenda, the [2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement](#) aims to provide practical support for operational staff to translate the IASC Framework and Action Agenda into practice at the country level.

Where previous frameworks defined *what* durable solutions are and *why* they matter, this Guidance concentrates on *how* the UN and its partners can deliver them – particularly through rights-based, nationally owned, and development-focused approaches. It is primarily aimed at Resident Coordinators (RCs), Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs), UN Country Teams (UNCTs), and their partners.

The Guidance reinforces the call to shift away from humanitarian-only responses, promoting integrated strategies that involve peacebuilding, human rights, and development actors from the outset. Solutions must be voluntary, inclusive, participatory, rights-based, and evidence-based. To support this, the Guidance outlines a suite of operational tools, including community consultations, inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms, and solutions financing strategies.

RCs/HCs are tasked with leading solutions efforts, engaging governments, aligning humanitarian and development planning, and convening Solutions Working Groups (SWGs) – joint platforms for HCTs and UNCTs to coordinate action, supported by UNHCR, IOM and UNDP. To further enable country-level action, the Guidance introduces a range of support mechanisms. The Global Solutions Hub provides technical advice and fosters peer-to-peer learning. The [Internal Displacement Solutions Fund \(IDSF\)](#) offers joint funding for UN Country Teams to initiate nationally led strategies. The [Solutions Adviser Facility](#) deploys experienced personnel to support in-country planning and coordination efforts.

The Guidance also places emphasis on pivoting early from short-term relief to long-term planning. RC/HCs are encouraged to conduct “[pivot reviews](#)” using four key assessments: IDP profiling, protection analysis, government capacity, and UNCT readiness. These reviews help inform strategic planning and determine when solutions are viable and sustainable.

The Guidance also reinforces the importance of embedding solutions into the UN Cooperation Framework and Humanitarian Response Plans, ensuring internal displacement is addressed across all stages of planning and programming.

To monitor progress, the Guidance uses the IASC's eight durable solutions criteria (listed in table above). These are now complemented by evolving statistical tools (e.g., [IRIS](#) and the [DSID](#) Task Force's metrics) that help define when an IDP has overcome displacement-related vulnerabilities.

## 7.3 Role of the Protection Cluster in Durable Solutions

The Protection Cluster can be an influential actor in enabling rights-based durable solutions. You can help advance durable solutions for IDPs through strategic engagement, and operational activities.

At the **strategic level**, the Protection Cluster advocates for:

- A rights-based approach to solutions planning.
- The meaningful participation of IDPs and affected communities in decisions affecting them.

- Inclusive approaches that address the needs of at-risk groups, including women and girls, persons with disabilities, and minorities.
- The integration of protection risks and analysis in all coordination, planning, and funding processes.
- The application of international standards, particularly the Guiding Principles and the IASC Framework.

At the **operational level**, Protection Clusters contribute by:

- Conducting protection monitoring, risk analysis, and intention surveys to ensure that IDPs are informed and consulted.
- Applying an inclusion lens to operational activities to ensure that support and services are accessible, appropriate, and equitable for all displacement-affected groups, especially those who face systemic or social exclusion.
- Engaging with national partners to support access to civil documentation, legal aid, and justice.
- Supporting social cohesion, peacebuilding, and conflict sensitivity in areas of return, integration or relocation (for both displaced and host communities).
- Ensuring access to justice and supporting transitional justice mechanisms where relevant.
- Working with government actors and other clusters to ensure protection risks are addressed from the onset.

The Protection Cluster also plays an advocacy role in ensuring voluntary and informed decision-making, preventing forced return, and supporting solutions pathways that match IDPs' aspirations and protection needs.

## The GPC Durable Solutions Guidance for Protection Clusters

To support country coordinators in engaging in durable solutions processes, the Global Protection Cluster developed a **Practical Guidance on the Role of Protection Clusters in Durable Solutions Processes**. Aligned with the 2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement, this resource is designed not as a prescriptive tool, but as a flexible menu of entry points and opportunities to explore how Protection Clusters can contribute to durable solutions in different contexts.

Rather than offering strict direction, the guidance presents multiple ways to engage. It is structured around five key entry points, which are also linked to the eight IASC criteria for durable solutions, and offering a range of activities, approaches, and ideas for Protection Clusters to consider.

- **Ensuring robust government leadership:** Protection actors support government-led solutions efforts by reinforcing national systems, advocating for law and policy reforms, and ensuring national development strategies include IDPs.
- **Ensuring IDPs drive decision-making:** This includes facilitating informed choices through access to information, intention surveys, and go-and-see visits. It also means promoting participation mechanisms that reflect the diversity of displacement-affected communities.
- **Building clear solutions pathways:** Protection Clusters help assess conditions in return and relocation areas, provide guidance on minimum standards, and work across clusters to define principled and realistic pathways to durable solutions.
- **Laying the groundwork early:** Solutions must begin at the onset of displacement. Protection actors contribute by supporting civil documentation, housing rights, livelihoods, and access to education – all essential for long-term recovery.

- **Gathering evidence for protection-informed solutions:** Protection monitoring and analysis must inform solutions strategies. Protection Clusters contribute critical data on protection risks, legal barriers, community intentions, and potential obstacles to safe return or integration.

Rather than treating durable solutions as a late-stage activity, the guidance calls for early and sustained protection engagement, embedded across all phases of the response. It reinforces the need for multi-sectoral collaboration, joined-up analysis, and localisation strategies to ensure sustainability and ownership.

The guidance also provides a wide range of practical examples and best practices to illustrate how Protection Clusters have contributed to durable solutions across different contexts. These include examples of legislative advocacy in [Niger](#), civil documentation initiatives in [Syria](#), the establishment of IDP councils in [Ukraine](#), and community consultations regarding IDP intentions in [Mozambique](#).

**In addition to multiple best practices and resources, this GPC DS Guidance contains:**

- *A Menu of Options* for each of the 5 Building Blocks discussed above
- Annex 1: [The Protection Cluster and the Durable Solutions Coordination Mechanisms at Country Level](#)
- Annex 2: [Solutions Support Tool: Protection Risks, Obstacles and Entry Points for Protection Clusters](#)
- Annex 3: [IDP Protection Risk Assessment Tool in Government-led Solutions Processes](#)
- Annex 4: [Guiding Principles and Standards to be included in Joint Durable Solutions Guidance at National or Local Level.](#)

## How to Engage in Durable Solutions Processes

Engagement in durable solutions processes can be challenging for Protection Clusters. Coordination structures for solutions are often complex, vary widely across contexts, and frequently sit outside of traditional humanitarian systems. Planning is often led by national governments, development actors, or UN leadership, and may involve new or ad hoc coordination structures. Entry points may not be immediately obvious, and understanding the coordination landscape is the first step to contributing effectively.

Two key coordination mechanisms/platforms where Protection Clusters can engage are the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), and Solutions Working Groups (SWGs).

**Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG):** The ICCG is often the primary coordination space where Protection Clusters can engage on durable solutions in a multisectoral way. Through the ICCG, Protection Clusters can contribute to joint analysis, promote the integration of protection risks into broader strategies, and advocate for durable solutions to be regularly discussed (e.g., as a standing item on the agenda every 3-4 months). The ICCG also offers opportunities to promote IDP inclusion in national systems and facilitate collaborative planning between clusters on key issues such as access, housing, or livelihoods that directly impact solutions outcomes.

**Solutions Working Groups (SWGs):** SWGs are often established at the technical level and may be led by government counterparts, UN RCs, or UNCT actors such as UNHCR, IOM or UNDP. These groups serve as operational platforms to plan, coordinate, and monitor durable solutions strategies. Protection Clusters can contribute by sharing protection analysis and data, advocating for the inclusion of at-risk groups, and ensuring that IDP protection safeguards are reflected in plans. Engagement in SWGs also provides an opportunity to strengthen coherence between humanitarian, development, and peace actors.

## 7.4 Key Resources and Tools

Title	Type	Language	Year
Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement	Normative Framework	<u>ENG</u> , <u>40+ others</u>	1998
IASC Framework on Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Persons	Inter-Agency Framework	<u>ENG</u>	2010
Action Agenda on Internal Displacement – UN Secretary-General	Strategic Policy Agenda	<u>ENG, FRE,</u> <u>中文,</u> <u>Русский</u> <u>ESP, العربية</u>	2022
2025 Guidance on Solutions to Internal Displacement	Operational Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2025
Role of Protection Clusters in Durable Solutions Processes – GPC Practical Guidance	Cluster Operational Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2025
Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future – Report of UN SG’s High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement.	Report from High-Level Panel	<u>ENG, FRE,</u> <u>ESP,</u> <u>Русский,</u> <u>العربية, 中文</u>	2021
Kampala Convention – African Union Convention on the Protection and Assistance of IDPs in Africa	Regional Legal Instrument	<u>ENG, FRE,</u> <u>ARA, POR</u>	2009
International Recommendations on IDP Statistics (IRIS) – Expert Group on Refugee & IDP Statistics	Statistical Standards Guidance	<u>ENG, FRE,</u> <u>ESP, Русский</u> <u>язык, عربي</u>	2020
Proposal for Improving Data for Solutions to Internal Displacement (DSID)	Statistical Standards Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2023
GPC Legal Aid and Access to Justice in Humanitarian Settings – GPC Task Team on Law & Policy	Technical Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2024
IASC, Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus: IASC Light Guidance (Advancing Approach through Global Clusters)	IASC Operational Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2020
Recommendations on Cooperation between Humanitarian Organizations and IDP Councils: Ukraine Protection Cluster	Case Study/ Recommendations	<u>ENG, UKR</u>	2024
Standard Operating Procedures for Go-and-See Visits (Mozambique Protection Cluster)	Field SOPs	<u>ENG, POR</u>	2022
Global Protection Cluster Guidance on Housing, Land, and Property (HLP)	GPC Guidance	<u>ENG</u>	2024
Aide Memoire: Protection Principles Related to IDP Durable Solutions including Returns to Areas of Origin or Habitual Residence – Sudan Protection Cluster	Aide Memoire	<u>ENG</u>	2024

## Protection Field Coordination Toolkit – Overview of Chapters

Visit the [main toolkit landing page](#) or navigate directly to the chapters below to access more resources and information on the Protection Cluster's role in the following areas:

### Protection Field Coordination Toolkit – Overview of Chapters

#### **Chapter 1: Humanitarian Coordination Overview**

- Coordination models for internal displacement, refugee response and mixed situations
- Cluster Activation Criteria and Processes

#### **Chapter 2: Humanitarian Programme Cycle**

- Elements / Principles of the HPC and the Role of the Cluster
- Flash Appeals and Pooled Funds
- Integration cross-cutting issues and the Centrality of Protection into the HPC

#### **Chapter 3: Internal Displacement**

- Internal displacement and the needs of IDPs.
- Legal frameworks and displacement

#### **Chapter 4: Protection in Armed Conflict**

- International Law/Principles
- Humanitarian protection and Protection of Civilians (PoC).
- Humanitarian Civil-Military Coordination

#### **Chapter 5: Centrality of Protection**

- The Protection Cluster's responsibilities in CoP
- The difference between mainstreaming, integration and the centrality of protection.
- IASC processes and HCT benchmarks

#### **Chapter 6: Climate, Disaster, and Sudden Onset Emergencies**

- Terminology and definitions in climate and disasters.
- Responding to sudden onset emergencies
- Actions that can be taken after a sudden onset shock (day 1-5)
- Climate and disaster preparedness and response.

#### **Chapter 7: Durable Solutions**

- Global frameworks guiding Durable Solutions
- Supporting durable solutions at strategic and operational levels.
- The GPC Durable Solutions Guidance for Protection Clusters

#### **Chapter 8: Cluster Transition, Deactivation and Reform**

- Criteria for cluster deactivation and transition
- Transition processes
- Humanitarian reform initiatives
- Area-based coordination

#### **Chapter 9: Advocacy and Communication**

- Developing advocacy strategies and action plans
- Preparing briefings to ICCG/HCT and engaging donors
- Leveraging human rights mechanisms
- Communication products and media engagement

#### **Chapter 10: Data Responsibility and Safe Information Management**

- Principles of data safeguarding, management and sharing
- Data responsibility in humanitarian action
- Safe and effective data handling

#### **Chapter 11: Cross-Cutting Issues**

- Age, Gender, Diversity and Disability Inclusion
- MHPSS
- AAP
- PSEA
- Protection Mainstreaming

#### **Chapter 12: Understanding Protection Programmatic Approaches and Interventions**

- Locally Led Responses
- Community Based Protection
- Case Management
- Service Mapping and Referrals
- Legal Aid, Law and Policy
- Cash and Protection
- Humanitarian Negotiations
- Anti-Trafficking
- Mobile and Rapid Protection Responses